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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, June 1, 1932

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Keeping the House in Repair." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics and the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, U.S.D.A.

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If you have an up-and-coming Next-door Neighbor like mine, you never know where you'll find her next. Where do you suppose she was yesterday afternoon? Out on her roof!

"Hello, Aunt Sammy," I heard her voice calling.

But when I looked around she was nowhere to be seen.

"Where on earth are you?"

"I'm not on the earth at present. I'm up here on my roof."

Sure enough. There she was and her husband with her.

"Take care," I said. "Don't get so near that edge. It makes me dizzy. Please tell me what two sensible people like yourselves are doing way up there."

"We're inspecting our house from top to bottom and beginning at the top, as you see."

Presently my neighbors came down to my level, much to my relief. When I asked for an explanation of their excursion to the roof they explained that they were going over their house to check up on the repairs it needed.

"You see," explained my neighbor, "my husband has more surplus time than cash this season, so he's decided to spend this time catching up on house repairs and thus helping to keep up the value of our property."

"That's a thrifty idea that I'll pass on to Uncle Ebenezer," I said.



"And" continued my neighbor, "we plan to go over the whole house, outside and inside, jotting down all the things that need to be done. As you noticed we began at the roof. That's the place to check up on missing or broken shingles or slates. That's also the place to look at the metal flashings around the chimney and other places on the roof to see if they need to be replaced or repainted. These metal flashings, you know, are what keeps the rain from dripping down between the roof and the chimney. And, while we were up there, we looked over the chimney itself, examining the top for loose bricks and looking at the joints to see whether the mortar was holding. Open joints need refilling. Keeping the chimney in good condition is one way to cut down fire risks.

"Then we had a look at the gutters and down spouts. They need attention every spring. Snow and ice during the winter may tear them loose or may cause seams to open. Also frequently the leaves and trash caught in the gutters need cleaning out."

That, as my neighbor said, was just a start on the business of house inspection for repairs. The next step is to look at the sides of your house. There may be some loose siding to tighten. Windows and doors may need attention. A broken window pane, for example, needs replacing at once or it may permit bad damage to floors and walls. Rusted out screen wire needs to be replaced, loose moldings tacked down and the frames repainted. As for doors, they need to be kept in the best condition. A little oil on hinges, locks and closing devices makes them work quietly and smoothly.

Then there are the porches to think about, especially the floor and steps. Porches are so exposed to the weather that they often need repairs sooner than the rest of the house. First look for rotten or loose boards, or nails that have worked up. Look after these in the interest of home safety as well as for thrift. Many bad accidents have resulted from loose floor boards or unsteady steps. So examine the supporting timbers of your porch and the treads of each step. If the porch roof is metal, its life depends on keeping it well painted.

So it goes through the whole house. These little repairs, these stitches in time, do so much toward keeping up property values that all of us who own homes will find that it pays to keep them up. Instead of waiting until the roof has a bad leak and spoils the plaster in the front bedroom, instead of waiting until the repair job becomes serious and expensive, make a yearly inspection of your home and make the little repairs while they are little.

You may be interested in the movement on foot this year to repair and modernize old houses. Organizations are taking this scheme up as a means of helping the unemployment problem. Muncie, Indiana, staged a very interesting demonstration of this kind last year, which in the end opened up a lot of new jobs. One house was modernized at a cost of \$1100 and 28 men were employed on the job. The idea spread all over the city and, in a short time, 113 new pieces of work were reported. When the plan was started, a thousand families were receiving aid from the city, but in a few weeks this number had been reduced 60 percent. Other Indiana towns then took up the Muncie plan and the Governor appointed a commission to help.



And let me tell you what the Department of Agriculture has to help you. If you want information on plumbing repairs, painting, concrete work or building chimneys, write me and I'll see that you receive free bulletins containing detailed information on any of these subjects.

Then there is a very helpful booklet telling you how to do all kinds of household repair jobs, small and large, yourself. This is published by the Department of Commerce. It is called "The Care and Repair of the House." It is not a free publication but is sold for fifty cents by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

Now, for today's menu.

For a change, we're having a cheese and egg dish for the main part of the meal. One of the best cheese and egg combinations I know of -- cheese souffle. With it serve creamed new green peas; Crisp whole wheat muffins; Mixed salad greens with French dressing; and, for dessert, Cherry pie.

Souffle of any kind is one of those dishes that simply will not stand and wait for a family that is slow about coming to the dinner table. Right out of the oven, it is fluffy, delicate and most delicious. But after standing awhile it is likely to fall, to lose its lightness and its delicacy. So have your family warned to come promptly at the sound of the dinner bell if they want to taste perfect souffle.

A word about cooking this dish. Long slow cooking is one of the secrets of success. The very moderate oven heat of 300 degrees Fahrenheit expands the air bubbles in the egg whites and sets the light mixture throughout but does not toughen it. When baked at very moderate heat for an hour or longer, a souffle which is served immediately should not fall. But once out of the oven a souffle baked too fast will collapse like a pricked balloon. You see, if the oven is too hot the outside will over-cook before the center is set. That's why it falls flat later.

Write me for leaflet number 39 called "Eggs at Any Meal."

Now would you like the best recipe I know for cheese souffle? All right. Please be ready to write down eight ingredients first thing.

4 eggs	1/2 pound American cheese
1 1/2 cups milk	3/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup fine dry bread crumbs	1/8 teaspoon paprika
1 tablespoon butter	3 drops tabasco sauce.

I'll repeat that list (Repeat.)

Heat the milk, bread crumbs, and butter in a double boiler. Shave the cheese into thin slices, add it to the hot mixture, and stir until the cheese has melted. Add this mixture to the well-beaten egg yolks. Season to taste with paprika and tabasco. Fold the hot mixture into the stiffly beaten egg whites containing the salt, pour into a buttered dish, and bake in a very moderate oven (300° F.) for one hour, or until set in the center. Serve immediately.

Before we stop, let's go over that menu once again. Choose souffle; Creamed new green peas; Crisp whole wheat muffins; Mixed salad greens with French dressing; and, for dessert, Cherry pie.

For Thursday: "Child Nutrition."

